

WFWP South London, UK's Young Women's Speech Contest 2019 report

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Unique, uplifting, bright, impactful, empowering, inspiring are just some of the words that we can describe this 2019 Women's Speech Contest were 5 candidates between 18 and 39 years old delivered outstanding high smart presentations across the theme: Career, Marriage, Motherhood and I.

It was held at WFWP South London Branch organised by our most amazing Dolores Read. The jury panel was exceptionally well conducted by:

- Mr. Colin Gardiner has been a journalist for newspapers and travel Magazines. He worked as a writer and editor for the BBC World Service, The Financial Times and the Oxford Mail as well; as for national newspapers in Egypt and Zimbabwe. Mr. Gardiner also spent 5 years as an English instructor in Japan.
- Mrs. Susan Crosthwaite from Australia. She has been a teacher for 25 years in Australia, USA, UK and Europe giving lectures and workshops to young people. Mrs. Crosthwaite has written poems and a book called: Loving Living Words.
- Mrs. Mitty Tohma is the president of the WFWP in UK for more than 12 years. In her leadership WFWP developed Educational Programmes and Projects. Mrs. Tohma has experienced been a judge for the Speech Contest in Central London on past years.



The Jury was presented and so the Speech Competition started. The candidates were presented as follow:

1) Michelle Attakora-Mensah. Her speech title was: Women, Career and Future.

One of the most captivating parts of her speech was when she said:

Women! Now is the time for us to awaken from our silences and voice out like never before.

We need to completely take charge and fight for what we believe in, what belongs to us, what they said we can never do and what we aim to achieve. The time to act is now. Let us speak to cause a change in the way society or should we say "the world" perceive women. Let us speak to cause a change

in our career development and our future. The future of strong women who have been silent for far too long. Talk of Gender Inequality...Talk of womens' pay-gaps, we all are fully aware of the gender imbalance and disparities in most prestigious government jobs, especially those involving leadership.

2) Sherifa Carr. Her speech title was: I.

She delighted us with a real life yet very deep insightful speech:

Throughout life on many occasions I found myself vulnerable in need of a father direction, a mother comfort and listening ears and a husband for guidance and protection, but I discovered in time that I first needed to find and develop myself educate myself and find my purpose. I realised that it would be wrong for me to put all my hopes and dreams into a man and be married just out of loneliness as the most dangerous place for any woman to be, is actually in the arms of the wrong man. I found my faith and this allowed me to have the understanding that everything happens for a reason all for a purpose and nothing happens before its time.



3) Sanjana Poddar. Her speech title was: Balancing Career, Marriage and Motherhood.

In her brilliantly articulated speech she raised important insightful and reflective options in women's balancing life:

I realised that although we live in a time when success for a woman is defined as a lot more than being able to make a sandwich and bear children, when we stand at the fork roads, we often accidentally step into the puddle of thinking that we've got to pick two of the three choices: being successful at work, having a successful marriage and being a successful mother. Creating a balance was never about planning the route well to walk all the terrains as much as possible or wearing and wearing out all the shoes equally, it was about being able to stop and change them whenever needed. Creating a balance wasn't about equality, it was about flexibility and adaptability.

4) Omolara Ojikutu. Her Speech title was: Career, marriage and motherhood entwined to create the woman that I am today.

Her speech was a presentation of a very touching, inspirational and challenging story with amazing insights based on her real life:

My NQT years I felt like a stand-up comedian to engage and teach the kids RE. RE is great! We'll have debates for and against, some role plays, games and don't forget the tests! Assessments, parents evening, twilight evenings, where did the years go. I have been teaching for 10 years now. You realise time flies when your students become mothers.

The marriage part crept in between the nights up. Let's start our own family let's have some kids and that's when the next challenge began. The first semester was like a rollercoaster, my body stretched, itched and my appetite increased. I thought I was superwoman, cooking, cleaning whilst you were close beside me but one early morning in a silent voice, I cried out honey, I need rest I just can't cope. Motherhood it wasn't glamorous in the beginning. I would wear a good top feeling like I had made an effort. Soon I gave up when burping up sick and dribbling became the norm, why wasn't I warned that, this came with been a mum. Career, marriage and motherhood I would not change a single thing. Each carries a different hat, for growth and development that has shaped the woman that I am today.

5) Dong Soon Chen. Her Speech title was: Love and Freedom in Career, Marriage, Motherhood and I.

She made a very clever insightful and deep analysis of how Love can set you free. She brilliantly highlighted the utmost importance of the embodiment of love and freedom in any aspect of life within career, marriage, motherhood and herself. So she also presented a beautiful metaphor of a bird that can use its wings to fly and to be free in life. She stated in her speech:

How many years of your life do you want to live in freedom and how many years do you want to live caged? A bird caged is not free for it does not achieve the things its purposed to do. Birds are meant to fly.

Similarly, We are caged birds raising our voices speaking out and singing songs in an attempt to vocalise what we are missing in our lives, to voice the needs we are lacking and innately deserve – we deserve a pure and untampered love. Love is the basis of integrity, honesty. Without love you will always feel like you are holding back and never honouring your true self, thus never being able to fully honour others. Love releases, liberates and give you life.

After the speeches were presented all the candidates and attendants enjoyed a time for networking, socializing and enjoyed a delicious buffet with snacks, pizza, fruits, cakes and drinks. In the meantime, the jury was deliberating and evaluating each speech to have the results of the winner.

The Winner of the 3rd Prize was announced. She was Dong Soon Chen.

The winner of the 2nd Prize was: Omolara Ojikutu

The winner of the 1st Prize was Sanjana Poddar. She also received an automatic entrance for the National Speech competition on the 5th October later this year.

Each of them received a framed certificate. We had beautiful pictures and moments of celebration with all the candidates and winners. We congratulate all of them not only for their inspirational presentations but for their courage and determination to deliver such wonderful and empowering speeches.

They were like magical moments for all of us because we also took a especial time to wish and sing Happy Birthday to Mitty Tohma, our Director of WFWP UK. We all enjoyed a birthday cake and she was greatly pleased with it.

We would like to say a big Thank you to everyone, especially to Dolores Read who was organizer of this beautiful and meaningful WFWP event; along with her husband.

A Special thank you to the Jury panel, to Mr. Colin Gardiner, Mrs. Susan Crosthwaite and Mrs. Mitty Tohma for their great job in their deliberation of prizes; and finally to everyone who attended and supported the event.

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